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YUGOSLAV CIVIL AIR TRANSPORTATION

JAT (Yugoslav Air Transport) was established in 1947 with the help of the Army which supplied pilots. In the same year flights of twin-engine Douglases flew 3,500 flights, carried 26,000 passengers, and travelled 600,000 kilometers. The following runs were inaugurated: Belgrade-Zagreb-Ljubljana, Belgrade-Skoplje, Zagreb-Sarajevo, and Zagreb-Zadar. Flights abroad were maintained on the Belgrade-Prague-Warsaw line.

The management of JAT planned to open three new runs in 1948: Belgrade-Split, Belgrade-Ljubljana-Trieste, and Zagreb-Susak-Pula, and to establish air taxi service between Zagreb and Zadar.

The opening of these runs did not take place because of the Cominform Resolution. Difficulty in obtaining aviation gasoline from the USSR and from Rumania made it necessary to decrease the number of existing runs. The following runs were eliminated in 1948: Belgrade-Skoplje, Belgrade-Sarajevo, Sarajevo-Zagreb-Belgrade-Zagreb-Ljubljana, and Belgrade-Titograd.

A joint Yugoslav-Soviet company, JUSTA, established for civilian air transportation, continued to operate during this time. Until its liquidation, JUSTA controlled Yugoslav airports and collected taxes from landing planes.

With the suspension of deliveries of gasoline and the practice of discrimination by JUSTA, as well as direct sabotage in overhauling engines (engines were held in Czechoslovakia from 6 to 12 months), Yugoslav air transportation was restricted to a single run. This situation continued until the beginning of 1949, when Yugoslav oil refineries began to produce aviation gasoline, and Yugoslav mechanics were qualified to overhaul engines themselves.

After a year's interruption, planes began to operate anew on the Belgrade-Prague, Belgrade-Titograd, Belgrade-Sarajevo-Dubrovnik, Belgrade-Skoplje, and Belgrade-Zagreb-Ljubljana runs.

The capitals of the People's Republics got excellent connections with Belgrade. For example, the Ljubljana-Zagreb-Belgrade-Skoplje run connects the two farthest centers of the People's Republics.

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The plane from Ljubljana to Belgrade leaves at 0600 and arrives at the Belgrade airport at 0845. From 0900, when the airport bus brought the traveller to the center of the city of Belgrade, until 1500, he has time to transact his business. At 1630, the traveller can leave for Skoplje the following day at 0700, and arrive in Belgrade at 0830. Until 1545 when the plane leaves for Ljubljana, he has sufficient time to transact new business. The plane arrives at Ljubljana at 1830. The entire fare from Ljubljana to Skoplje and return is 6,980 dinars.

White-collar workers from Sarajevo, Zagreb, Ljubljana, or Skoplje can travel to Belgrade, complete their work at the ministry, and return to their home office in one day.

The use of planes as a means of transportation has shortened the absences of specialists from their places of work and has achieved economy in per-diem payments. For example, specialists travelling to Titograd to aid in draining Lake Skadar can reach Titograd in 90 minutes by plane, while the railroad journey took 50 hours. Statistics show that 3,300 passengers were carried on this run in 1949. They spent 4,950 hours on planes. If they had travelled by train, these 3,300 travellers would have spent 165,000 hours in travel alone.

Civil aviation in Yugoslavia today carries 500 passengers daily and flies 4,000 kilometers.

As safety measures, new pilots fly only under favorable conditions and always with an experienced pilot before undertaking more difficult flights. It is not easy to land at the Sarajevo airport, which is closed in by mountains and often shrouded with fog. Likewise, it is difficult to land at Sinjsko Polje which is narrow, and also at the Titograd airport.

Today, Yugoslav planes fly to Zurich, Munich, and Frankfurt. They aid the national economy by destroying forest pests (30,000 hectares of forests of a planned 45,000 hectares were sprayed in 1949), and by destroying mosquitoes by spraying swampland. They use Yugoslav gasoline.

The Belgrade-Sarajevo-Split-Zagreb-Split-Sarajevo-Belgrade run connects the center of the country with the Adriatic Sea. Labor union members with union passes are able to reach the Adriatic Sea in 90 minutes and need not lose a single day of their annual vacations.

Leaving Zemun at 0730, the flight arrives at Sarajevo not quite 55 minutes later. The stop at Sarajevo is 15 minutes. Continuing the journey to Sinjsko Polje, a distance of 672 kilometers, which takes one day and one night on the Belgrade-Bihac-Split railroad line, the plane lands in less than 2 hours. It has flown over Bjelasnica Mountain, the Neretva River, the electric power plants at Jablanica, Livno, Livanjsko Polje, and Sinjsko Polje.

Sinjsko Polje airport is 36 kilometers from Split. It takes the airport bus an hour to travel this distance, the same time required to fly between Belgrade and Sarajevo. From the Sinjsko Polje airport the contours of the city of Split are seen in the distance. On the right are two cement factories, then the gigantic "Jubcvinil" Vinyl Plastics Factory, and the "Vicko Krstulovic" Shipyard. Split is not only a sea resort but is also an important industrial and port city. Its ramified economy has achieved rapid connection with its capital in Zagreb via the Split-Zagreb air line. The plane which brings travellers from Belgrade immediately flies directly to Zagreb. It returns from Zagreb at 1600, stops at Sinjsko Polje only to pick up passengers, and then returns directly to Belgrade.

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